

This Third Voyage was the most important expedition that had hitherto been made by the English nation beyond the coasts of Europe. Of its numerical strength we have no precise record; but it could hardly have been less than from 300 to 400 men: a very considerable force for that time, to send on such a remote adventure.

Its tragical fate, so far from being a discouragement to English seamen, only stung them to a manifold revenge; and the baptism of blood at San Juan de Ulua was afterwards expiated in the plunder of many an unfortunate Spanish ship. DRAKE never rested till his "particular Indignation" of it was fully assuaged: and it was in pursuit of that object, that we see him (*p.* 535) on the 16th February, 1573, on the top of a very high tree on the dividing ridge of Central America, gazing, for the first time, on the Pacific Ocean; which sight moved him to his famous Voyage round the World.

On the other hand, we must consider the Spaniards' point of view. They were alarmed in the highest degree at seeing a strong English fleet at the very door of the Indies. If they came to San Juan de Ulua with impunity; not Mexico itself, nor Peru, nor the annual galleons that came from the Philippine islands would be safe from these heretical islanders. We can appreciate their instant realisation of this menace to their power; also their quick sense of insult at the impudent audacity of these Englishmen in coming thus unbidden to their hidden Treasure House; and how both these motives would occasion an almost frenzied purpose to destroy them, any how, and at any cost. The stigma on them, therefore, comes not so much from their fighting, as from their supreme treachery; but they seem to have chosen treachery, as feeling they had no chance in a fair fight; as indeed it actually turned out. For in the fight itself between the ships, HAWKINS was the victor. It was the fired ships (a strange anticipation of those, at Calais, twenty years later) that compelled the English to abandon the *Jesus*, and the vast treasure that she contained.

This Third Voyage is also memorable as being the first occasion on which English keels funned that hitherto unknown sea, the Bay of Mexico. The Spaniards had kept their West Indian navigations a dead secret. No foreigner\* unless naturalised by marriage and a long residence in Spain, had a chance of obtaining a license to go to the West Indies. The English had no charts or maps to guide them, and had to grope their way as best they could; often only by compelling the help of the local pilots whom they took prisoners.

In those days, the English always entered the West Indies by the South, by Trinidad and the northern shore of South America; and then felt their way northwards as well as they were able: so that Mexico, though geographically much nearer to England, was considered by them as much more remote and less known. It was an excellent proof of HAWKINS'S good seamanship, that the *Mown* ever 'got out of the Bay of Mexico' at all. It took \* them a month, (16 Oct.—16 Nov. 1573, *p.* 225) to do so: whereas, once clear of the West Indies, he sailed across the much wider, but more familiar Atlantic in about six weeks' time.]